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ABSTRACT

This report evaluated the Child Centered Reading Program which was designed to develop and improve reading ability, behavioral attitudes, and self image of the 2000 inner city elementary students participating in the program. The program was administered by a coordinator, four reading teachers and two educational assistants. The activities included introduction of the lesson by the teacher, workbook activity, reading from the reader either individually or in small groups, and testing at the conclusion of each book. Recreational activities were also an integral part of the program. Seven hundred thirty eight kindergarteners, 521 first graders, 355 second graders, and 313 third graders from six Queens public schools participated in the program. The evaluation of the program was to determine whether the reading grades of the students showed a statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores. Also, the self image of the program participants was assessed by the Teacher's Evaluation of a Child's Self-Image Rating Scale at the beginning and end of the program. The summary of the evaluation findings indicated that kindergarten and first graders improved their reading ability as prescribed in the program objective. Sixty-four and six-tenths percent of the second graders achieved on or above reading grade levels as measured by post-tests. However, third grade test results failed to show anticipated gains in reading grades. The results of the self image scale indicated that 97 percent of the participating students maintained or improved their self image ratings with 82 percent showing outright improved ratings. The self image scale is included in the appendix. (Author/JP)

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EVALUATION REPORT

Function No. 20-63430

THE CHILD CENTERED READING PROGRAM

EVALUATION PERIOD

September, 1975 to June, 1976

Joseph S. Lechowicz, Ph. D.

An Evaluation of Selected New York City Umbrella Programs funded under a Special Grant of the New York State Legislature performed for the Board of Education of the City of New York for the 1975-1976 school year.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
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CHAPTER 1. THE PROGRAM

The program was designed to develop and improve reading ability on grade level or above for 2000 K-3 inner city students of six schools in Queens County, New York. (One additional school including 250 students entered the program in April, 1976). In addition the program attempted to assist students in improving behavioral attitudes and self-image. The program's funding was accomplished by a special grant of the New York State Legislature performed for the New York City Board of Education.

School administrators had requested the introduction/continuance of the program in each target school. Also, information concerning the program was presented to school personnel and parents early in the program as well as at the end of the previous school year. Target students were selected through pre-test reading scores and by parental request/consent.

The Child Centered Reading Program was designated as a complementary reading program for participating schools. The program was directly serviced by the coordinator, four reading teachers and two educational assistants. The coordinator (1) directed the overall functioning of the program, (2) held workshops and gave demonstrations lessons for staff and teachers in participating schools, (3) and was responsible for continuing the program in existing schools, introducing it into new schools, and (4) maintaining continuous contact with the Board of Education, district superintendents, prin-

cipals and pupil personnel staff. The four reading teachers had the responsibility of (1) assisting the coordinator with workshops, (2) giving demonstration lessons on new aspects of the program in each teacher's classroom, especially for new teachers to the program, and (3) training paraprofessionals and volunteer parents to tutor children in small groups. The educational assistants (1) worked on a one-to-one basis or in small groups with children who were having reading difficulty, (2) prepared materials and reinforcement exercises for teachers, and (3) assisted with keeping records of testing and materials.

The program activities for the target students centered on using the Child Centered Reading Program five days per week in the classroom as an integral part of the school's reading program. The activities included introduction of the day's lesson by the teacher, workbook activity presided over by the teacher, reading from the reader either individually or in small groups, and testing at the conclusion of each book. Individual lesson activities included singing, numerous word games, stories, chalkboard group activities, selected enrichment materials and some use of opaque projectors. Each of the activities was designed and developed for the program. In addition, the instructional methodology used in the program was designed not only to develop and improve reading skills but also to enhance students' self-confidence.

The program was operational from late September, 1975 through June, 1976.

CHAPTER 2. EVALUATIVE PROCEDURES

Evaluation Objective #1: To determine whether, as a result of participation in the Child Centered Reading Program, the reading grades of 75 percent of kindergarten and first grade participants will show a statistically significant difference between the pre-test score and the post-test score.

The kindergarten target students were pre- and post-tested with the New York City Pre-Reading Assessment Test. This test was comprised of two sub-tests: (1) Language: vocabulary, and listening ability, and (2) Visual Discrimination: distinction between words. For first graders, pre- and post-testing was measured by the MAT Reading Test, Primary Level. This test included two subscales: (1) Listening for Sounds, and (2) Total Reading. The pre-testing was completed in November, 1975, for both kindergarten and first graders. According to the coordinator, pre-testing was delayed because tests could not be ordered until funds were finalized. The program specialist, however, stated that tests could have been ordered in September, 1975. Post-tests for both levels were administered in April, 1976. The data were analyzed by means of correlated t-tests for comparison of actual tests means.

Students who participated in the program for five and one-half months were tested. Hence, 577 of 738 kindergarten students and 454 of 521 first graders were included in pre- and post-testing. The loss of target students was attributable to the following: (1) mobility of students, i.e., early discharges or late entrance of students, (2) absences during testing, and (3) language difficulties.

Evaluation Objective #2: As a result of participation in the program, the reading grades of 75 percent of the second and third grade participants in 60 percent or more of the scheduled sessions will be achieving on or above grade level in reading as measured by the pre-post-test administration of standardized reading achievement tests. In addition these students will show a statistically significant difference between the real post-test score and the anticipated post-test score.

The second grade target students were pre-tested by the Stanford Achievement Test, Primary Level, and post-tested via the New York City-wide Reading Test. The pre-testing was completed in November, 1975, again because of delays in funding, and ordering and receiving tests.

The third grade participants were pre- post-tested with the New York City-wide Reading Test. Pre-tests were administered on April 14, 1975. Post-tests for both second and third grade target students were administered on March 30, 1976. The Stanford Achievement Test, Primary Level, and the New York City-wide Reading Test were reported by the publisher to be completely compatible with respect to norms. Hence the data for both second and third grade tests were analyzed by the real post-test vs. the anticipated post-test design.

Student participants of more than five and one-half months were included in the test sampling. Therefore, 294 of 355 second graders and 247 of 313 third graders completed both the pre- and post-tests. Again loss of target students was attributable to (1) absences on the city-wide testing day,

(2) mobility of students, (3) language difficulties.

Evaluation Objective #3: As a result of participation in the program the self-image of 80 percent of the program participants will be maintained or improved as measured by the pre- post administration of the "Teacher's Evaluation of a Child's Self-Image" Rating Scale.

All target students were rated via the "Teacher's Evaluation of a Child's Self-Image" Rating Scale, as designed by the program coordinator. Confer Appendix A. The fifteen item scale, was used by each teacher as a pre- post-evaluation of the child's behavioral attitudes and self-image. Evaluations were completed in November, 1975 and April, 1976. The teachers evaluated 1747 students. The comparison results were studied through descriptive statistics and analysis.

Evaluation Objective #4: To determine the extent to which the program was implemented, and the extent to which the program conforms with the description in the program proposal.

The evaluation of the fourth objective was accomplished through ten on-site field visits. All of the teacher-trainers and educational assistants were observed during instruction. Twenty-four classroom teachers were observed performing lessons with 513 students. The coordinator, teacher-trainers, principals and classroom teachers were interviewed. Field visits included each of the target schools. One school entering the program in April, 1976, was evaluated as to the fourth evaluation objective only.

CHAPTER 3. FINDINGS

The first evaluation objective stated: "To determine whether, as a result of participation in the Child Centered Reading Program, the reading grades of 75 percent of kindergarten and first grade participants will show a statistically significant difference between the pre-test score and the post-test score." Data analysis of the 577 kindergarten students in the "Language" subtest revealed the t-ratio was 24.73 ($p < .001$), based on the pre- and post-test scores on the New York City Pre-Reading Assessment Test. For the second subscale, "Visual Discrimination," the data analysis of 553 kindergarten students revealed the t-ratio to be 29.51 ($p < .001$) based on pre- post-testing. Table 1 contains a summary of the revelant data for kindergarten students.

TABLE 1

Pre- and Post-test Results for Kindergarten Students.

Sub-Test	N	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	<u>t</u> -Value	Sig.
Language	577	55.13	81.34	24.73	$p < .001$
Visual Discrimination	553	38.15	71.50	29.51	$p < .001$

The data analysis for 454 first graders in the "Listening for Sounds" subscale showed the t-ratio to be 23.54 ($p < .001$) based on the pre- and post-test scores on the NAT Reading Test, Primary Level. In the second subtest, "Total Reading," the data analysis of 449 first graders indicated a t-ratio of 25.66 ($p < .001$) based on the pre- and post-testing. Table 2 summarizes the relevant data for the first grade students.

TABLE 2

Pre- and Post-Test Results for First Grade Students

Sub-Test	N	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	t- Value	Sig.
Listening for Sounds	454	55.81	79.73	23.54	$p < .001$
Total Reading	449	51.02	80.13	25.66	$p < .001$

The second evaluation objective stated: "As a result of participation in the program, the reading grades of 75 percent of the second and third grade participants in 60 percent or more of the the scheduled sessions will be achieving on or above grade level in reading as measured by the pre-post test administration of standardized reading achievement tests. In addition these students will show a statistically significant difference between the real post-test score and the anticipated post-test score." Data analysis revealed that, for 294 second graders tested in this component of the project, the t-ratio was 7.80 ($p < .001$) based on the pre-test scores of the Stanford Achievement Test, Primary Level and post-test scores of the New York City-wide Reading Test. The tests of significance were derived by comparison of actual post-test scores and anticipated post-test scores. Table 3 summarizes these results.

TABLE 3

Pre- and Post-Test Results for Second Grade Students

Test	N	Pre-Test Date Mean	Predicted Post-Test Mean	Actual Post-Test Date Mean	t- Value	Sig.
Total Reading	294	11/75 2.91	3.36	3/76 3.73	7.80	$p < .001$

Additional examination of the second grade scores showed that 190 of 294 or 64.6 percent of the second graders were achieving on or above grade level (2.7 years) in reading as measured by post-tests given March 30, 1976. It should be mentioned that 48 or 16.3 percent of the second graders measured at full scale (6.0 years) on the post-test. A large number of these students were already at full scale, 26 students, on the pre-test. Such high numbers of target students at full scale could bring up the question: Was the power of the test adequate to measure the true reading achievement of these second graders?

For third grade target students, the data were analyzed separately from those of second graders. The results of the tests of significance between actual post-test scores and anticipated post-test scores showed non-positive results and the t-value was non-significant (t = -12.26). Examination of the scores seemed to indicate that the third grade students generally did improve; however, actual gains were not nearly sufficient to match expected gains. Table 4 summarizes the results of the third grade pre- and post-testing.

TABLE 4

Pre- and Post-Test Results for Third Grade Students

Test	N	Pre-Test Date	Pre-Test Mean	Predicted Post-Test Mean	Actual Post-Test Date	Actual Post-Test Mean	<u>t</u> - Value	Sig.
Total Reading	247	4/75	3.86	4.71	3/76	4.05	-12.26	ns

Additional examination of the data for third graders indicated that 142 of 247 or 57.5 percent were achieving on or above grade level(3.7 years) in reading as measured by the post test given March 30, 1976. Only 11 third graders were at full scale(7.0 years) on the post test as compared with 48 third graders at full scale on the pre-tests(6.0 years).

The high level of reading ability for many of the second and third graders at the beginning of their program is to be noted by the pre-test means, 2.91 years and 3.86 years respectively. Such scores indicate that the majority of the second and third graders were almost one year above grade level before the beginning of the present program, presumably because of previous training in the program.

The third evaluation objective stated: "As a result of participation in the program the self-image of 80 percent of the program participants will be maintained or improved as measured by the pre- post administration of the 'Teacher's Evaluation of a Child's Self-Image' Rating Scale". The information on self-image of the target students was gathered through pre- post- ratings by classroom teachers of their students on a 15 item instrument. The data showed that 1706 of 1747 students or 97.65 percent maintained or improved their ratings on the "Self-Image" scale. In addition 1440 of 1747 students or 82.43 percent improved their ratings. A summary of "Self-Image" ratings is included in Tables 5 and 6.

TABLE 5

Self-Image Ratings: Improved, Maintained, or Declined by Pupils

Self-Image Measure	Number of Pupils	Percent of Pupils
Improvement	1440	82.42
Maintenance	266	15.23
Decline	41	2.35
Total	1747	100.00

In determining the self-image measures, the following scoring procedures were used for student ratings on a three point scale for the 15 items: (1) Improvement: Improved items outnumbered declined items. (2) Maintenance: Improved items equally countered declined items. Improved or declined items were noted. (3) Decline: Declined items outnumbered improved or maintained items. Table 6 gives greater specificity to the "Self-Image" Ratings.

TABLE 6

Improvement or Maintenance of Self-Image Ratings by Pupils

Number of Items Improved	Number of Pupils	Percent of 1747 Pupils
15 - 13	120	6.87
12 - 9	207	11.85
8 - 5	361	20.66
4 - 1	752	43.04
None	266	15.23
Total	1706	97.65

The results demonstrated overwhelmingly that according to classroom teachers' perceptions, over 82 percent of the target children improved in their classroom ratings on the "Self-Image" Scale. In general the ratings appeared to be lacking bias. Note that 58 percent of the pupils improved on four or less of the items. In a small minority of cases

teachers' post-ratings were so closely related to pre-ratings that knowledge or recall of pre-ratings was evident.

The fourth evaluation objective stated: "To determine the extent to which the program is implemented, and the extent to which the program conforms with the description in the program proposal." Field visits and interviews with principals, classroom teachers and project staff revealed that the program implementation did parallel the Program Proposal in terms of (1) staff, (2) objectives, (3) equipment, and (4) the program activities. The program staff was of high calibre and dedication. The coordinator exercised excellent leadership, supervision and organization in influencing and maintaining the program itself as well as its objectives. The four teacher trainers were always found to be enthusiastic and effective in assisting classroom teachers or students with reading lessons. The two teaching assistants did well in assisting in administrative tasks and in the preparation of materials. They also tutored children. One teaching assistant, however, lacked a necessary training in reading and was somewhat handicapped as a tutor. Principals and classroom teachers all testified to the excellent rapport existing between project personnel and the teaching staff.

Such outstanding human relations of the coordinator and teacher trainers was not only genuine but sustained by professional effort. They felt that building self-image and self-confidence in students hinged on their modeling such behavior for both teachers and students. The coordinator

was, indeed, concerned that any increase in self-image and self-confidence of students could be validly measured on the instrument being used.

Every school was able to provide a room for tutoring of small groups and most provided office and storage space for equipment and materials. Classroom teachers were satisfied with the reading materials provided them. Paperbound texts and accompanying workbooks were provided for each level of the program. Students were observed to be consistently interested in the lessons presented and the materials used. They looked forward to taking their books home on completion. The materials were of appropriate difficulty for student learning. The limited number of opaque projectors were used effectively by teachers with enrichment and supplementary materials.

A variety of excellent teaching activities was observed all of which were integrated into the lessons of the program. For instance, the earlier levels of the program utilized a multi-sensory approach very successfully with (1) songs, (2) group chalkboard activities, and (3) the use of sets of plastic letters. Such motivational and learning activities were observed in classroom and small group lessons. Principals, teachers and parents voiced great enthusiasm for the program and were seriously concerned for yearly funding.

The beginning of the program paralleled that of the school year which was delayed by a labor dispute and disturbed by late cutbacks in classroom personnel. These cutbacks meant the movement of many teachers to new schools, new classes,

and levels that they had never taught before. At least seven classes within the program had multiple teachers during the year: five classes had three teachers and two classes had two different teachers. Class size was apparently increased by at least five students. To further undercut the program, 9 of 10 third grade teachers were newly assigned to it this year.

Although the proposal specified a target group of 2000 from six schools, 1927 students were enrolled. The program was expanded in April, 1976 to include one more school with 250 students. The final school entering the program was evaluated and observed to be integrating it into the kindergarten classes.

Recommendations of the 1974-75 school year evaluation study for this project were the following:

1. ".... A workshop should be conducted at the beginning of the project year for the project staff, at which, training in proper administration, scoring and reporting of test scores is given...." No workshop was reported by the coordinator. However, she did indicate her efforts at (1) determining the project evaluator in order to obtain assistance in selecting, administering and scoring pre-tests, (2) discussing by phone the pre-testing with staff members of the Office of Educational Evaluation, and (3) extended discussions with the program evaluator to facilitate effective administration and scoring and reporting of post-test results.
2. "Staff for the program should be increased..." The staff had been increased by one to four teacher-trainers. The number of educational assistants remained at two.

3. "Funds should be made available for the publication of a teacher's manual..." The teachers manual was completed and two of four workbooks have been developed for the third grade level.

4. "A truck driver should be hired to transport materials..." Not only were funds not made available for delivery of materials, but recompense to two young men moving a great number of materials at the beginning, was not granted.

5. "More effective audio-visual materials and equipment should be explored..." An opaque projector has been obtained for each target site and a "Language Master" has been purchased for remediation.

6. "Additional staff time should be directed toward holding parent workshops..." Parent workshops were held in each target school not only for interested parents but for new and interested teachers.

CHAPTER 4. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The first evaluation objective concerning the higher post-test reading scores of kindergarten and first graders as compared to pre-test scores was accomplished with a high degree of statistical significance at both levels. For the two kindergarten subtests, Language and Visual Discrimination, the tests of significance were both beyond the .001 level. Similarly, the two first grade subtests, Listening for Sounds and Total Reading, were highly significant.

The second evaluation objective measured the difference between real post-test scores and anticipated post-test scores for second and third grade target students. In the case of second graders, the gain in reading scores was statistically significant beyond the .001 level. Additionally, 64.6 percent of them achieved on or above reading grade level as measured by post-tests. However, third grade test results failed significantly to show anticipated gains. A significant correlation seemed to indicate that generally, students did raise their reading level, though not sufficiently to meet anticipated gains. Post-test results showed that 57.5 percent of third graders were achieving on or above grade level. Many students were nearly one year beyond reading grade level at the outset of the program in both the second and third grades raising the question concerning the ability of the pre- post-tests to adequately measure their reading ability.

The third evaluation objective attempted to measure the increase in self-image of target students through pre- and post-ratings of classroom teachers on a 15 item scale.

The results demonstrated that 97 percent of the target students maintained or improved their self-image ratings with 82 percent showing outright improved ratings.

Lastly the program implementation paralleled the Program Proposal. Therefore, based upon the extent to which the evaluation objectives were achieved, it is strongly recommended that the program be recycled.

Recommendations in redesigning the project are as follows:

1. Development of a system of guidelines for phasing out second and/or third grade students/classes from the program who have achieved a high degree of reading ability, i.e., phasing out a student who is one and one-half years above grade level, or phasing out a class if 50 percent are one year above grade level in reading. Thus the program may increase its services to more needy students.
2. The number of teacher-trainers should be increased by one to continue the program in its presently expanded functioning in seven schools. Educational assistants should have a minimal level of reading ability before hiring.
3. Increased development and use of audio-visual materials should be integrated into the lessons of the program. Limited funding for an outside consultant would be proper, to accomplish such program improvements.
4. Difficulties in testing and evaluation continue to arise especially at the beginning of the project. Expertise in this area should be afforded directly to the program staff, perhaps through funding of a part-time consultant, or through services available at the Board of Education.

THE CHILD CENTERED READING PROGRAM

TEACHER'S EVALUATION OF A CHILD'S SELF-IMAGE

Child's Name _____

School _____

Date _____

Class _____

	VERY GOOD	SATISFACTORY	POOR
1. Attitude towards school _____			
2. Functions well alone _____			
3. Functions well with others _____			
4. Leadership qualities _____			
5. Functions academically in a small group _____			
6. Functions academically with their entire class _____			
7. Ability to make friends easily _____			
8. Relates well to adults _____			
9. Relates well to peers _____			
10. Ability to verbalize _____			
11. Auditory discrimination _____			
12. Motor coordination _____			
13. Identification of words and letters _____			
14. Follows direction easily _____			
15. Desire to learn _____			

Teacher's Comments: